

DDI/IC 72-0767/1

Executive Registry

72-5169

28 SEP 1972

MEMORANDUM FOR: Dr. Kissinger, Chairman, NSCIC

SUBJECT : Policy Guidance on Current Intelligence Reporting

1. A survey of current intelligence reporting in the U.S. intelligence community, conducted for the NSCIC Working Group, has raised in my mind a question of intelligence emphasis and substance on which policy guidance would be appreciated.

2. A request to U.S. intelligence organizations, world-wide, for copies of current intelligence publications produced on a serial basis during April 1972 resulted in submission of 316 different reports. The State Department provided only one publication, the Defense Intelligence Agency eight, and the Central Intelligence Agency 27 -- but the National Security Agency submitted 90 reports and the Unified and Specified Commands and their components provided 146 reports. The balance came from the headquarters organizations of the military services (26 - of which the Navy produced 23), the service scientific and technical organizations (16) and the Air Force Security Service (2). Almost half (123) of the 316 publications are being disseminated at least five times per week and another 90 no less frequently than weekly.

3. These publications reflect the response of U.S. intelligence to a variety of needs: the need to keep high-level civilian and military officials informed as to current happenings in areas of security and policy interest to the United States; the need to provide operational military forces with information relating to mission requirements, as in Southeast Asia and the NATO area; and the need to train intelligence staffs for readiness to function in crisis and conflict situations.

4. I was pleased to find that the survey indicates there is no significant amount of inter-organizational duplication in the publications. Detailed comparison between the CIA Central Intelligence Bulletin and the DIA Intelligence Summary for 1 - 15 April, for instance, indicated that only about 10 percent of the items in the two publications were "nearly identical," with another 16 percent "generally similar" in content, but about three-fourths of the items in each serial did not appear in the other.

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5. In large measure -- and particularly in the case of NSA and military command reports -- the current intelligence publications reflect responses to specific collection requirements in quite narrowly defined subject matter fields.

6. Nine-tenths of the current intelligence publications submitted for review are devoted to military and military-related subjects, and military items are prominent in many of the publications in the other one-tenth. Much of this reporting is in response to or an extension of information requirements which have accumulated in the cold war years. The result is virtually a wartime reporting structure in which many elements of U.S. intelligence follow in great detail all military developments in all of the communist countries at all times.

7. More than 85 of the current intelligence serials -- including 33 daily reports -- are devoted to different aspects of Soviet military activities and capabilities. Hostilities in Southeast Asia and related developments in that part of the world are the sole focus of 65 publications. Thirteen reports deal specifically with North Korean activities and targets. Forty-three serials -- 20 of them issued daily -- report on merchant shipping and on Soviet fishing fleets at sea.

8. I recognize that these kinds of reporting are basically tied to operational mission assignments, but they also reflect an interpretation by intelligence staffs as to what is needed. Accordingly, I have already asked the chiefs of intelligence production organizations to reexamine the collection and production requirements and the timeliness factors on which they base the content and frequency of issuance of their current intelligence publications.

9. Beyond this, however, I believe it would be of value to me and to the intelligence community as a whole if we could obtain an expression of policy guidance to confirm whether the President and his advisors consider that the present scope and character of current intelligence coverage is in keeping with today's U.S. security and policy interests.

Richard Helms

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